

CENTRAL PARK SHABINESS
DUE TO PUBLIC INTERFERENCE.

Little comprehension of the true purpose of the City's Breathing Space—Eternal Vigilance the Price of Preserving the Parks From Vandal's Schemes.

"The present shabby condition of Central Park seems to be due entirely to the lack of genuine interest shown by the people themselves in the preservation of this most beautiful breathing spot," said a veteran employee of the landscape gardening department the other day. "It is enough to break one's heart to see the way in which this almost perfect piece of landscape architecture is allowed to get sloppy and down at the heels, to have its roads ruined by the chains on automobile wheels, its ponds and lakes made stagnant and filled with sewage and its lawns devastated by thoughtless crowds."

"If the soil was not so light it would not make much difference how many children and grown people were allowed to romp over the lawns, but under the circumstances in order to preserve the beauty of the park rigid restrictions should be maintained all through the season for the preservation of the sod. People do not seem to appreciate what are the true purposes of parks in crowded cities."

"Parks in my estimation are merely places for rest and recreation, and the nearer to nature they conform the better adapted they are for the purposes for which they are created. In spite of the great beauty of Central Park, the evidence of the city designers to make it as restful as possible, our people have made it largely a great parade ground for the rich in their carriages and automobiles and a loafing place for petty crooks and men and women out of work."

"Automobiles, particularly those with chains on the tires, should never be permitted in the park and the commissioner who attempted to prohibit all machines showed that, although he had to yield in the end, he appreciated the measure for the purposes for which breathing places like Central Park are or ought to be maintained. One does not go there to be choked by foul gases or to watch touring cars tear by at a speed that is a menace to life and limb. They get all they want of that kind of excitement in other parts of the city."

"How incongruous it is when you stop to think about it to see these huge machines racing through scenes of great natural beauty which were designed with an eye toward quietude to quietude in the china shop is quite mild in comparison. Yet in pleasant weather those who seek the park to rest or to study nature find it difficult to get out of the range of these maddening flyers. They are ubiquitous, and often the air is befouled for half an hour by a single machine."

"It is curious also what impressions many people have, some of them otherwise intelligent enough, about the use of parks. In a crowded city like New York, for instance, where real estate is so exceedingly valuable, many hard headed business men cannot see why so much valuable space is left unimproved, so that when there is any talk about a new building there are always those who advocate putting it in a park, thus saving the price of a site."

"Our little City Hall Park is a striking example of this. It was none too large when it extended to Ann street on the north and free and clear to Chambers street on the south, but the city fathers and the lines of the City Hall. But the vandals descended upon it and, like their progenitors of old, grass never grew again where their horses roared."

"Instead in the open space there sprang such architectural monstrosities as the dingy old Federal Building and the Tweed court house, not to say anything about the hideous brownstone building and the ramshackle fire station. The fire station is now gone, as is the rickety old structure that used to house all the valuable records of the city."

"They would be standing yet if the necessities of the subway construction had not compelled their demolition. As for the Federal Building, the Government of course will never restore the site to park purposes, and it will likely be years and years before a new court house is built."

"It was a penny wise and pound foolish idea, even from a material standpoint, to destroy the beauty of the space around the City Hall, for had the municipal officials considered sites close to the property taken for the buildings with this time have increased enormously in value. And then to these were added the twin eyerases on the Mall staircase."

"But the spirit of vandalism, as far as parks are concerned, seems to be ever rampant in the most thickly settled parts of Manhattan. But the scheme to breathe a new life into the park, to have the growth of the small park and have it rejoined in its extension, but it makes me rather sad to see the uses of some of them are put to rest."

"The edge of one of them was used for a long time as a fish market for pike, perch, and bass, and these fish were taken by hook and line and refused to poison the atmosphere that it threatened to poison the atmosphere of the whole neighborhood. Nice use for a park, isn't it?"

"The police, who pose as the friends of the peep, fought for the retention of this fishy market in the park, but the pressure brought by the settlement people and other East Side residents finally compelled the officials to put the fish market under the Williamsburg Bridge."

"Other small parks are taken up with apparatus for the electric and in spite of the fact that a large proportion of the people for whose benefit these parks were designed, such as women, girls and small children, can't use them for the purpose intended."

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"Real estate sharks and others who foresee the rapid growth of the population in the city are not slow to devote so large a territory to a breathing place and the scheme to out of the part north of Seventy-second street found many respectable and influential backers. It was only the courage of the original Park Commission that saved the scheme from such a fate. Fancy Central Park squeezed in between Fifty-ninth and Seventy-second streets and the upper sections covered by residences, stores and apartment houses."

"Yet the respectable and influential citizens who favored the scheme to destroy the usefulness of the park have their successors to-day, and they are the hardest class of all to deal with in the matter of preserving Central Park intact from vandal schemes. Some of the most unwarranted

A MEMBER WHO WAS ALLOWED
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Another Who Got a Country Club to Let Him Out of Signing Checks—The Young Governor Who Took Care of a Believing—Making Money by Hiring Cabs.

Even the rules of New York clubs are not inflexible. It was not long ago that one of them went so far out of its usual routine as to allow an older member to pay cash for everything he had. His case was out of the ordinary. He was not young, he was a bit alone in the world, and his only relative, a sister, lived in the South, and he was a member of the club. One day he went to one of the governors and asked for a few minutes.

"You see," he said, "I am an old man. There are not many years before me in this world. I have all my affairs ready to leave. I have not a debt in the world."

"There is one thing, however, that troubles me. I have to wait every month before I pay my bills here. Couldn't the house committee make some arrangement by which I could pay every night when I go away? That would be a great relief to me and I could sleep much better with the knowledge that I had settled up everything for the day."

Such a request had never been made before. It was necessary to have the house committee take action on it. The governor told him, however, that he would bring it up before the members. They granted the permission and the cashier daily made out the statement for this member.

Another clubman had asked the governor to request the cancellation of the government of a country club in the neighborhood of New York. He one day approached the cashier with the request that he might make some arrangement by which he would not be pay, pay, pay from the time he got to the club until he went back to New York.

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"But that is a very well," the member replied, "but it is a great nuisance to me to have to sign a check for my caddy, for a new golf ball if I need one, for a glass of shandygaff, for a newspaper and a stage to carry me to the station. I counted up the other day and I had signed ten checks before I left here."

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It was the case for the new governor, who had not opened his head until that time, but had only shaken it to show that he assented. He cleared his throat as he took the floor and he said to the club members, "I will keep your request in mind, Mr. A—," he said. "You may rely on my interest in your behalf."

He took a course in piano tuning in the State institution and he still does some of this work. Success in tuning musical instruments depends almost entirely on the ears and the eyes are not an important factor. Many blind people follow this profession. Mr. Walters takes the more pride in his clock repairing because few blind people have attained success in this line of work."

It is interesting to watch Mr. Walters repair a clock. As he takes it to pieces he does not place the wheels and other parts under order before him, as one might imagine he would. They are piled together on the table, but when he begins putting the clock together he has no difficulty in finding the right part. He has been at the clock for a long time. When he picks up the wheels and other delicate parts and adjusts them without any hesitation it seems as though he works largely by intuition."

"I can't fix a watch," said Mr. Walters. "There is, of course, a limit to the sense of touch. The parts of a watch are so small and delicate that they can't be handled without the use of the eyesight. In most cases the eyes must be supplemented by a magnifying glass. But I can fix any clock that's made."

"I have felt that if I had my eyesight and watch repairer than anything else. Since my boy I have had a special fondness for taking intricate machinery apart and putting it together again. Now when I have no clocks to fix and am lonely, I take apart the old clocks I have on hand and take it apart and put it back together just for the pleasure I find in the work."

CLUB RULES MADE TO ORDER

Another Who Got a Country Club to Let Him Out of Signing Checks—The Young Governor Who Took Care of a Believing—Making Money by Hiring Cabs.

Even the rules of New York clubs are not inflexible. It was not long ago that one of them went so far out of its usual routine as to allow an older member to pay cash for everything he had. His case was out of the ordinary. He was not young, he was a bit alone in the world, and his only relative, a sister, lived in the South, and he was a member of the club. One day he went to one of the governors and asked for a few minutes.

"You see," he said, "I am an old man. There are not many years before me in this world. I have all my affairs ready to leave. I have not a debt in the world."

"There is one thing, however, that troubles me. I have to wait every month before I pay my bills here. Couldn't the house committee make some arrangement by which I could pay every night when I go away? That would be a great relief to me and I could sleep much better with the knowledge that I had settled up everything for the day."

Such a request had never been made before. It was necessary to have the house committee take action on it. The governor told him, however, that he would bring it up before the members. They granted the permission and the cashier daily made out the statement for this member.

Another clubman had asked the governor to request the cancellation of the government of a country club in the neighborhood of New York. He one day approached the cashier with the request that he might make some arrangement by which he would not be pay, pay, pay from the time he got to the club until he went back to New York.

"It is the rule that all charges in the club house and for the game," said the cashier, "must be signed for before the member leaves the club."